

STATE SENATOR DENNIS OLSHOVE

Serving Center Line, Eastpointe, Fraser, St. Clair Shores and Warren

STATE CAPITOL NEWS



Dear Citizens,

The summer is coming to a close and the Michigan State Senate is preparing to take on several tasks of great importance. The articles in this newsletter will provide you with a brief summary of issues that are being discussed or debated before the Legislature, as well as state and community news. I hope you find them informative.

Several issues remain at the top of my agenda for the fall, including protecting and retaining jobs in the area, consumer protection issues, and addressing the growing needs of our aging population.

It is an honor representing the citizens of the 9th Senatorial District and I look forward to serving you in the months ahead.

A handwritten signature in red ink that reads "Dennis Olshove". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Dennis Olshove • State Senator • 9th District

How To Contact Me

Lansing Office

Senator Dennis Olshove
P.O. Box 30036
Lansing, MI 48909-7536

Phone: 517-373-8360
Fax: 517-373-9230

District Office

27500 Hoover
Warren, MI 48093
Phone: 586-757-7180

E-Mail

sendolshove@senate.michigan.gov

Website

www.senate.michigan.gov/olshove

Olshove to Take on Consumer Protection

I am currently working on over a dozen new consumer protection measures as part of a Consumer Rights Agenda. The new bills will include provisions that would:

- Provide fines for credit counseling agencies that charge up-front fees with the promise to relieve a consumer's debt but then fail to deliver any service.
- Establish criminal penalties for record management companies that knowingly fail to notify consumers that their personal records have been lost or stolen.
- Provide consumers with protection against theft of Social Security numbers by allowing people the option of proactively changing PIN numbers or control access numbers.
- Prohibit financial institutions from sharing personal information without obtaining the consumer's consent.
- Require consumer consent for the sharing of information with an unaffiliated third party.
- Provide the opportunity to say no to the sharing of information with a financial institution's affiliates.
- Separate charges on electricity and gas bills and require clear explanations of charges.
- Provide consumers relief, including damages and reasonable attorney fees, for individuals injured directly or indirectly as a result of an insurance company's violation of unfair trade practices.

SENIOR CORNER

Senior Tax Deferral Eligibility Level Raised

A bill boosting the income levels for seniors wishing to defer payment of summer property taxes passed and took effect recently. Under the legislation, the income level for deferred payments would increase to \$35,000, from \$25,000, for persons age 62 and older.

The new law also allows the deferred payment option without regard to income for those who are totally and permanently disabled, blind, paraplegic, quadriplegic, eligible serviceperson, eligible veteran, or eligible widow or widower.

Prescription Savings Available

I have recently been trying to combat high prescription drug costs through the creation of the MiRx Prescription Savings Program. The MiRx program provides a special discount card to Michigan residents who do not have prescription drug coverage. The uninsured and underinsured citizens who have long struggled to afford prescription drugs will be able to receive discounts varying from 5% to 25% off retail prices at participating pharmacies.

MiRx eligibility requires that applicants must be a resident of Michigan, have no other prescription drug coverage, and have an annual

household income below the Michigan median income level. The Michigan median income is conditional to the size of the household. The Michigan median income for a family of four is below \$56,550. There are no age limitations either.

The MiRx discount card is a free program with no application or processing fees. Eligible applicants will receive their MiRx cards in the mail after two weeks along with a list of participating pharmacies in their area. Call **1-866-755-6479** to have an application mailed to your house or visit **www.michigan.gov/mdch** to download an application.

Services for Seniors

The Macomb County Department of Senior Citizen Services offers several services to residents of Macomb County who are age 60 and older. Some of the services include:

- **The Chore Referral Information Program**

The program provides referrals of self-employed individuals who usually work part time and who will assist seniors with odd jobs and chores at a reduced rate.

- **Medical Equipment**

This is a short-term (2 or 3 months) loan of small medical equipment such as walkers, shower

chairs, wheelchairs, etc. when available.

- **Housing Alternatives**

Lists of different housing units in Macomb County for senior citizens and/or people with disabilities. The lists are available for senior citizens, family members, and caregivers.



For further information on these services, you can call either **(586) 469-6317** or **(586) 469-6327**. The Senior Citizen Service Center is located at the

Robert A. Verkuilen Building, 21885 Dunham Road, Suite 6, Clinton Township. They are open Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., except for holidays.

Job Base Grows in 9th District

Recently, I have been working on several initiatives to strengthen the job base here in the 9th Senate District. After months of intense negotiations, I am pleased to announce that both Macomb County military facilities were by and large spared in the latest round of closings by the United States Department of Defense. The Selfridge Air National Guard Base and the Detroit Arsenal remained largely intact.

Since 1988, Congress has authorized the examination of our military bases in order to determine which facilities are necessary for national defense and which are excess. Known as Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC), several rounds of this process have occurred since its inception. My goal in organizing a tour of the facilities with other area leaders was to validate the necessity to keep both Selfridge and the Detroit Arsenal up and running while maintaining their considerable job base in the area.

Additionally, Universal Am-Can, Ltd. chose Macomb County for the location of their new corporate headquarters facility. Universal Am-Can, a transportation services broker, is locating its administrative operations in the former research and testing

facility for Holley Carburetor on Stephens Road.

The corporate headquarters project is estimated to create 594 new jobs over the next five years and 848 new jobs statewide by 2017. Through 2017, the retention of this facility will create over \$15.7 million in state government revenues. The company also intends on making an \$8.6 million primary investment, which will total over \$16 million by the fifth year of operation.

Yet another job creation initiative, the Creating Opportunities for Renewed Economies—CORE—package is geared toward expanding and coordinating many state economic programs to operate more effectively, as well as provide incentives for growth in our cities and villages. Launched in 2004, the CORE package saw a number of its initiatives enacted in the last legislative session, using bold thinking along with common sense proposals to spur growth in city centers. The package is designed to help communities across the state revitalize their central business and residential districts, initiate new growth, and create job opportunities.

Olshove Helps Secure Water Monitoring Dollars

I was recently able to assist in securing a grant to provide real time water monitoring along the St. Clair River and Lake St. Clair. With assistance from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, we were able to acquire the \$760,000 grant.

The DEQ has been working with me and other officials from Southeast Michigan and Canada to reduce the hazards of chemical spills originating on both sides of the border and to develop methods to protect drinking water intakes. Real time monitoring equipment will immediately alert officials to potential threats to water supplies, allow them to shut off water intakes before any hazardous materials are able to contaminate drinking water supplies, and help identify those responsible for the spill.

Further information can be obtained at www.michigan.gov/deq.

Local Roads See Fixes

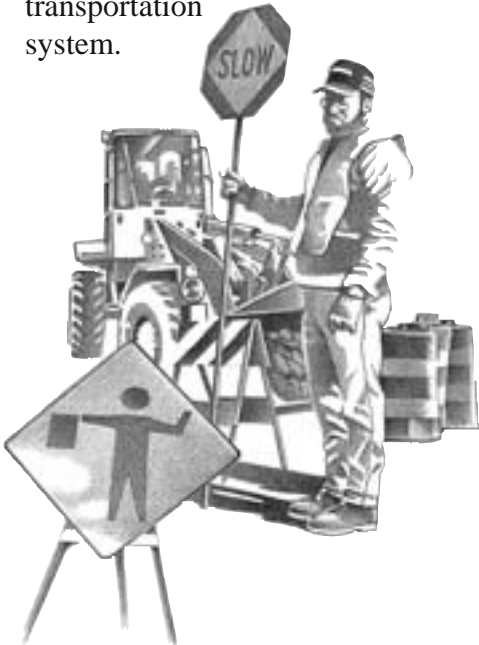
In local road news, planning was finally approved for several projects in the district. The task of resurfacing the I-696 service drive between Groesbeck and Milton is underway, as are repairs at the intersections of the service drive and Van Dyke, Mound, and Schoenherr Roads. While the projects initially began in the summer of 2003, local municipalities had trouble finding matching funds to meet the state's requirements.

In federal news, the U.S. House of Representatives recently passed a bill that increases federal transportation contributions and the U.S. Senate is expected to

increase the amount of highway tax dollars returned to the state. As of this writing, Michigan stands to receive \$1.2 billion in new federal money over the next five years. That compares to the current return of \$1.1 billion annually. While the amounts are significant, Michigan's needs are even greater.

Currently, the federal government returns to Michigan 90.5 cents for every dollar paid in highway taxes. State officials use these monies to fund highway projects and other transportation developments. The proposed increase to 92 cents on the dollar would mean an extra \$250 million

a year for the next five years. The one-and-a-half-cent increase means better roads, stronger bridges, and a healthier transportation system.





STATE SENATOR
DENNIS OLSHOVE

P.O. Box 30036
Lansing, MI 48909-7536



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CAPITOL VISITORS



The St. John Lutheran band from Fraser gathers for a photo on the Capitol steps before their concert.



The Jefferson Middle School band from St. Clair Shores joins Senator Olshove for a photo on the Senate floor.



Choir Director, Mrs. Meyette and the Westview Elementary School choir of Warren join Senator Olshove in the Rotunda of the State Capitol.

Olshove Welcomes Military Moms



Senator Olshove recently welcomed to Lansing the Semper Fi Moms, who testified before the Senate Committee on Senior Citizens and Veterans' Affairs. The support group for mothers of enlisted men and women hails from Eastpointe in the 9th Senatorial district.

The Semper Fi Moms are a support group that was founded by Tina Depew and Diane Oleksyn, both of whom have sons enlisted in the United States Marine Corps. Ms. Oleksyn, along with Sheila Dill, another member of the group, relayed to the committee the specifics of their group functions and ways in which the legislature could become more involved. The group has been in existence for just over a year, and their membership now includes nearly 20 individuals.

Ms. Oleksyn and Ms. Depew began the group as a support outlet for mothers struggling with having children overseas in the midst of combat. While the Semper Fi Moms were initially created to be a sounding board of both concerns and reassurance, they have now branched out to become a relief organization as well. Much of their time and resources are spent gathering items of need for soldiers overseas, and packaging and sending them.

For further information on the Semper Fi Moms, or to inquire about donations, please contact Diane Oleksyn at (586) 610-1342 or Diane_Oleksyn@hotmail.com.